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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 24 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan on 22 February 1997 in connection with the fifth anniversary of the genocide perpetrated by Armenian forces in the Azerbaijani town of Khodjaly on 26 February 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under item 114 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar KOULIEV
Permanent Representative

* A/52/50.

ANNEX

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 22 February 1997 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan

We will soon be marking a tragic date: the fifth anniversary of the monstrous slaughter of the peaceful inhabitants of Khodjaly by Armenian nationalists.

The barbarous act perpetrated in Khodjaly can rightfully be called genocide against the Azerbaijani people and can be compared to other similar crimes against humanity in this century, such as the mass extermination of civilians that took place in Lidice, Oradour-sur-Glane and Babi Yar.

On the night of 25/26 February 1992, bands of so-called "advocates of the self-determination of the Armenian population and the independence of Nagorny Karabakh", aided by foreign mercenaries and supported by the 366th regiment of the Soviet Army, razed a town with a predominantly Azerbaijani population, in which Meskhetian Turks, expelled from their homes, had found refuge. As a result of that tragic night, according to information from Helsinki Watch, an international non-governmental organization, approximately 800 civilians, including old people, women and children, were murdered, 421 wounded, more than 180 unaccounted for and over 500 taken hostage.

The Armenian nationalists were particularly inhumane and used refined methods of cruelty in dealing with their victims, which is attested by signs of desecration of the victims' bodies, looting and the presence in the surrounding forests of the frozen bodies of many old people, women and children who, unable to break through the encirclement, fell victim to ambushes organized by the Armenians.

At the present time, after the Lisbon Summit, at which all States members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - except Armenia - adopted the basic principles for a settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the Armenian side refuses to adhere to these principles, claiming that they jeopardize the safety of the Armenian population of Nagorny Karabakh and citing the possibility of future acts of genocide against Armenians by Azerbaijanis. In the light of the genocide perpetrated by Armenian nationalists in Khodjaly, such fabrications are blasphemous and are intended to hoodwink the international community.

The Azerbaijani Republic advocates a political settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and today, on the day of remembrance of the victims of Khodjaly, calls upon all parties involved in the conflict, as well as the countries participating as mediators in the settlement, to pursue constructive negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Conference of OSCE on the basis of the principles for a settlement that were proposed by the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE and supported at the OSCE Lisbon Summit, and to show the goodwill needed to achieve a speedy end to the conflict and to overcome all its tragic consequences.